

STATEWIDE COALITION OF PRESIDENTS OF RESIDENT COUNCILS

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Hello, my name is Brian Capshaw and I live at the newly named Aurora Senior Living Center of East Hartford. I'm testifying on behalf of the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils representing all 28,000 nursing home residents, of which approximately 17,000 receive a personal needs allowance under Medicaid.

As a nursing home resident I'm pleased to be here today to discuss Governor Malloy's proposed budget cuts under SB 1013. In particular the proposed reduction in the personal needs allowance, as well as the procurement of eyeglasses and dental services for nursing home residents on Medicaid.

The current personal needs allowance rate of 69 dollars per month is used to provide some of our basic needs, such as grooming products, basic cable television, monthly hair cut, a meal ordered in, and a new clothing item. For many residents, then the entire 69 dollars is gone.

A typical month includes 15 dollars for shampoo, body wash, and tooth paste, 20 dollars for basic cable TV, 15 dollars for a haircut, one meal ordered in, such as Chinese food 15 dollars, that's 65 dollars already without having to replace clothing that got lost in the facility's laundry.

In January, our Coalition put our proposal regarding the personal needs allowance in all legislators mailboxes, I hope all of you on the committee had the time to read it. In February, we were fortunate enough to sit down with the Co-chairs of the Committee on Aging, Senator Prague and Representative Serra, who both agreed that our personal needs allowance should not be reduced.

We ask that you consider the fact that our Personal Needs Allowance has not been increased for the last two years as there has been no cost of living increase during that time. In addition, Connecticut's nursing home residents will now be faced with increased proposed taxes on the few products/services (haircuts, clothing) we depend on to maintain our simple quality of life. Reducing our needs allowance any further will severely impact our quality of life.

Regarding eyeglass replacement from one pair a year to every 2 years, many residents of nursing homes on Medicaid have dementia and eyeglasses can easily get lost and need replacing on an annual basis. We ask that some consideration be made to accommodate such a situation.

Routine dental services are also proposed to be cut to once a year. Again, we ask that some consideration be given for those residents whose dental health requires service more than once a year.

In conclusion, I urge the Senate and the House to reject the governor's proposed budget cuts to our personal needs allowance as well as eyeglass replacement and routine dental service under SB 1013.

I'd like to thank the Committee on Human Services for your time and consideration. I respectfully urge you to support Connecticut's nursing home residents who are dependent on Medicaid.

Thank you

Brian Capshaw

Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Council